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PAPER VI

GIANT HAWTHORNS

Several hawthorn trees, Crateagus spp., standing in the Cranberry Glades of Pocahontas county, a short distance from the State Road Route 24, are of exceptional size and bear many indications of great age.

Some comparisons have been made of these trees with others of the same species in West Virginia and other states. The comparisons indicate that the hawthorns of the Cranberry Glades are unusually large, especially one of the trees which is larger than others of the group.

Attention was not called to the unusual size of the tree until very recently. The big hawthorns were probably first described by Dr. P. D. Strausbaugh, Professor of Botany, West Virginia University, who has visited the region a number of times. His attention was first called to the trees by a companion and subsequently he made some notes concerning the trees.

Dr. Strausbaugh described the trees and setting as follows:

"On a relatively flat-topped grass and fern covered hill at one side of the Cranberry Glades, are some unusually large hawthorn trees, Crateagus spp., The forest of this area was cut away many years ago so that the land could be used for pasturage. Undoubtedly the hawthorns became established during this period.

"As yet no borings have been made to determine the age of these trees, but their size indicates a venerable experience for many of them.

"One tree in particular, at height of three feet from the ground, has a trunk diameter of 20 inches, and exceeds 40 feet in height. All of these trees, heavily plastered, draped and bearded with lichens, are strangely gray and old looking."

The hawthorn is normally a small tree or large shrub seldom reaching more than 12 or 15 feet in height, and six or seven inches in diameter. These hawthorns seem to be in good condition, in spite of their apparent age, and barring the accidents of fire and lightning may continue to be landmarks in the community for many years.

NOTE-- In my own writings, and at least in the oral discussions of others the name, "Strausbaugh Hawthorn," has been applied to the largest tree of the group, honoring Dr. Strausbaugh who was first to bring the big tree to the attention of the public.

Dr. Strausbaugh mildly protested the application of this name to the trees in a conversation with me, probably out of feelings that were deeper than mere modesty. However the name has become rather generally established.

Publication of the information in this paper has been made in West Virginia newspapers and magazines and at least one national magazine.

West Virginia Writers' Project

RESEARCH IDENTIFICATION REPORT

Natural Setting
Pocahontas County

Subject Chapter (3)- Part 2 Sec A)

Date Dec 13th 1941.

Research Worker Roscoe W. Brown

Date Research Taken Dec 3- to Dec 13- 1941.

Typist Roscoe W. Brown.

Date Typed Dec 10-11- & 13- 1941.

Source By contact of flowers, description, &&
from history of West Va wild flowers

Date Filed _____

Glossary- from Columbia -Encyclopedia.

(Note)

The first two sheets hereto attached , is a brief Glossary of the peculiar words used in describing the wild flowers; and it should be written before or after this Section. It will greatly aid a reader for a ready reference.

Roscoe W. Brown.